

Bob Brownley laughed a horrible ringing laugh as he uttered these awful words. Then he beat his hand down on his shoulders as he said in a hoarse voice, "Jim, but for you I should have had crimps in that jackal philanthropist's soul by now and in the souls of his kind. But never mind. He will keep; he will surely keep until I get to him. Every day he lives he will be fitter for the crimping. Within the short two years since he finished grilling Judge Sands' soul, he has put himself in better form to appreciate his reward. I see by the press that at last his aristocratic wife has gold-cured Newport of his habit of dating back the name Reinhart to her scullionhood, and it has taken her into the high-society circle. I read the other day of his daughter's marriage to some English nob, and of the discovery of the ancient Reinhart family tree and crest with the mailed hand and two-edged disk and the vulture rampant, and the motto, 'Who strikes in the back strikes often.'"

He left me with his laugh still ringing in my ears. I shuddered as I passed under the old black-and-gold sign my uncle and my father had nailed over the office entrance in an age now dead, an age when Wall Street men talked of honor and gold, not gold and more gold.

In telling my wife of the day's happenings I could not refrain from giving vent to the feelings that consumed me. "Kate, Bob will surely do something awful one of these days. I can see no hope for him. He grows more and more the madman as he broods over his horrible situation. The whole thing seems incredible to me. Never was a human being in such perpetual living purgatory—unlimited, absolute power on the one hand, unfathomable, never-cool-down hell on the other."

"Jim, how does he do what he does? I cannot make out anything I have read or you have told me, how he creates those panics and makes all that money."

"No one has ever been able to figure it out," I answered. "I understand the stock business, but I cannot for the life of me see how he does it. He has none of the money powers in league with him, that's sure, for in the mood he has been in during the past two years it would be impossible for him to work with them, even if his salvation depended on it. The mention of any of the big 'System' men drives him to a fury. He has to-day made more money than any one man ever made in a day since the world began, and he had only commenced his work when he quit to please me. As I stand in the Exchange and watch him do it, it seems commonplace and simple. Afterward it is beyond my comprehension. At the gait he is going, the Rockefeller, Vandebilt, and Gould fortunes combined will look tiny in comparison with the one he will have in a few years. It is beyond my power of figuring out, and it gives me a headache every time I try to see through it."

CHAPTER VIII.

A number of times during the following year, and finally on the anniversary of the Sands tragedy, Bob carried the Exchange to the verge of panic, only to turn the market and save "the Street" in the end. His profits were fabulous. Already his fortune was estimated to be between two and three hundred millions, one of the largest in the world. His name had become one of terror wherever stocks were dealt in. Wall Street had come to regard his every deal, from the moment that he began operations, as inevitably successful. Now and again he would jump into the market when some of the plunging cliques had a bear raid under way, and would put them to rout by buying everything in sight and bidding up prices until it looked as though he intended to do as extraordinary work on the upside as he was wont to do on the down. At such times he was the idol of the Exchange, which worships the man who puts prices up as it hates him who pulls them down. Once when war news flashed over the wires from Washington and rumor had the cabinet members, senators, and congressmen selling the market short on advance information, when the "Standard Oil" banks had put up money rates to 150 per cent and a crash seemed inevitable, Bob suddenly smashed the loan market by offering to lend one hundred millions at four per cent; and by buying and bidding up prices at the same time, he put the whole Washington crowd and its New York accomplices to disastrous rout and caused them to lose millions. He continued his operations with increasing violence and increasing profit up to the fourth anniversary of the tragedy. On the intervening anniversary I had been compelled by self-interest and fear that he would really pull down the entire Wall Street structure, to rush in and fairly drag him out. But with his growing madness my influence was waning. Each raid he was with greater difficulty that I had his ear.

Finally, on the fourth anniversary, a panic that seemed to be running

into something more terrible than any previous, he savagely refused to accede to my appeal, telling me that he would not stop, even if Randolph and Randolph were doomed to go down in the crash. It had become known on the floor that I was the only one who could do anything with him in his frenzies, and my pleading with him in the lobby was watched by the members of the Exchange with triple-eyed suspense. When it was clear from his emphatic gestures and raised voice—for he was in a reckless mood from drink and madness and took no pains to disguise his intentions—that I could not prevail upon him, there was a frantic rush for the pines to throw over stocks in advance of him. Suddenly, after I had turned from him in despair, there flashed into my mind an idea. The situation was desperate. I was dealing with a madman, and I decided that I was justified in making this last try. I rushed back to him. "Bob, good-bye," I whispered in his ear. "good-bye. In ten minutes you will get word that Jim Randolph has cut his throat!"



"In Ten Minutes You Will Get Word That Jim Randolph Has Cut His Throat."

"Stop, Jim, for God's sake, don't say that to me. My cup is full now. Don't tell me I am to have that crime on my soul." He thought a moment. "I don't know whether you mean it, Jim, but I can take no chances, not for all the money in the world, not even for revenge. Wait here, Jim!" He yelled for his brokers, and several rushed to him from different parts of the room. He sent them back into the crowd while he dashed for the Amalgamated pole. The day was saved.

Presently he came back to me. "Jim, I must have a talk with you. Come over to my office." When we got there he turned the key and stood in front of me. His great eyes looked full into mine. In college days, gazing into their brown depths, by some magic I seemed to see the heroes and heroines of always happy-ending tales, as the child sees enchanted creatures far back in the burning Yule log flames. But there were no joyous beams in the haunted depths of Bob's eyes that day.

"Jim, you gave me an awful scare," he said brokenly. "Don't ever do it again. I have little left to live for. To be sure I have some feeling for mother, Fred, and sister. But for you I have a love second only to that I should have felt for Beulah and I have allowed to have her. The thought, Jim, that I had wrecked your life, with all you have to live for, would have been the last straw. My life is purgatory. Beulah is only an ever-present curse to me—a ghost that torments my heart and soul, one minute with a blind frenzy to revenge her wrongs, the next with an icy remorse that I have not already done so. If I did not have her, perhaps in time I could forget; perhaps I might lay out some scheme to help poor devils whose poverty makes life unendurable, and with the millions I have taken from the main shaft of hell I might do things that would at least bring quiet to my soul; but it is im-

possible with the living corpse of Beulah Sands before me every instant and that devil machinery whirling in my brain all the time the song, 'Revenge her and her father, revenge yourself.' It is impossible to give it up, Jim. I must have revenge. I must stop this machinery that is smashing up more American hearts and souls each year than all the rest of earth's grinders combined. Every day I delay I become more fendsish in my desires. Jim, don't think I do not know that I have literally turned into a fiend. Whenever of late I see myself in the mirror, I shudder. When I think of what I was when your father stood up in his office and started us in this heart-shriveling, soul-calculating business, and what I am now, I cannot keep the madness down except with rum. You know what it means for me to say this, me, who started with all the pride of a Brownley; but it is so, Jim. The other night I went home with my soul frozen with thoughts of the past and with my brain ablaze with rum, intending to end it all. I got out my revolver, and woke Beulah, but as I said, 'Bob is going to kill Beulah and himself,' she laughed that sweet child's laugh and clapping her hands said, 'Bob is so good to play with Beulah, and then I thought of that devil Reinhart and the other fiends of the 'System' being left to continue their work unimpeded and I could not do it. I must have revenge; I must smash that heart-crushing machinery. Then I can go, and take Beulah with me. Now, Jim, let us have it clearly understood once and for all!"

Remorse and softness were past; he was the Indian again. "I am going to wreck that hell-annex some day, and that some day will be the next time I start in. Don't argue with me, don't misunderstand me. To-day you stopped me. I don't know whether you meant what you threatened; I

open while, the ones they have had an opportunity to keep tab on. But I tell you that I have made even more in my secret deals than the amount they have seen me take. I have had my agents with my capital in every deal, every steal the 'System' has rigged up. The world has been throwing up its hands in horror because Carnegie, the blacksmith of Pittsburgh, pulled off three hundred millions of swag in the Steel hold-up—yes, swag, Jim. Don't scowl as though you wanted to read me a lecture on the coarseness of my language. I have learned to call this game of ours by its right name. It is not business enterprise with earned profits as results, but pulled-off tricks with bags of loot—black-jack swag—for their end.

"I got away with three hundred millions when Steel slumped from 105 to 50 and from 50 to 8, and no one knew I'd made a dollar. You and the 'Street' read every morning last year the 'guesses' as to who could be rounding up hundreds of millions on the slump. The papers and the market letters, one morning said it was Standard Oil; the next, it was Morgan; then it was Frick, Schwab, Gates, and so on down through the list. Of course, none of them denied: it is capital to all these knights of the road to be making millions in the minds of the world, even though they never get any of the money. Dick Turpin and Jonathan Wild were fonder of having the daring hold-ups than other highwaymen perpetrated laid to their doors, than are these modern bandits of being credited with ruthless deeds, that they did not commit. But Jim, 'twas I who sold Pennsylvania every morning for a year, while the selling was explained by the press as 'Cassatt cutting down Gould's telegraph poles. Gould and old man Rockefeller selling Pennsylvania to get even.' Jim Randolph, I have to-day a billion dollars, not the Rockefeller or Carnegie kind, but a real billion. If I had no other power but the power to call to-morrow for that billion in cash, it would be sufficient to lay in waste the financial world to-morrow night. You are welcome, Jim, to any part of that billion, and the more you take the happier you will make me, but when I strike in again, don't attempt to stay me, for it will do no good."

Shortly after this talk Bob left for Europe with Beulah. A great German expert on brain disorders had held out hope that a six months' treatment at his sanitarium in Berlin might aid in restoring his mind. The trip had been fruitless. It was plain to me that Bob was the same hopelessly desperate man as when he left, more hopeless, more desperate if anything than when he warned me of his determination.

When he left for Europe "the Street" breathed more freely, and as time went by and there was no sign of his confidence-disturbing influence in the market, the "System" began to bring out its deferred deals. Times were ripe for setting up the most wildly inflated stock lamb-shearing traps. It had been advertised throughout the world that Tom Reinhart, now a two-hundred-millionaire, was to consolidate his and many other enterprises into one gigantic trust with twelve billions of capital. His Union and Southern Pacific railroads, his Southern lines, together with his steamship company and lead, iron, and copper mines, were to be merged with the steel, traction, gas, and other enterprises, he owned jointly with "Standard Oil." Some of the railroads owned by Rockefeller and his pals, in which Reinhart had no part, were to go in too, and with these was to unite that mother hog of them all, "Standard Oil" itself. The trust was to be an enormous company, the like of which had until then not even been dreamed of by the most daring stock manipulators. The "System" banks, as well as trust and insurance companies throughout the country, had for a long time been getting into shape by concentrating the money of the country for this monster trust. It was newspaper and news bureau gossip that Reinhart and his crowd had bought millions of shares of the different stocks involved in the deal, and it was common knowledge that upon its successful completion Reinhart's fortune would be in the neighborhood of a billion. On October 1st the certificate of the Anti-People's Trust, \$12,000,000,000 capital, 120,000,000 shares, were listed upon the New York, London, and Boston Stock Exchanges, and the German and French Bourses, and trading in them started off fast and furious at 100. The claim that one billion of the twelve billions capital had been set aside to be used in protecting and manipulating the stock in the market, had been widely advertised that even the most daring plunger did not think of selling it short.

It was evident to all in the stock-scambling world that this was to be the "System's" grand coup, that at its completion the masses would be rudely awakened to a realization that their savings were invested in the combined American industries at vast, inflated values, that the few had all the real money, and that any attempt upon the people's part to regulate and control the new system of robbery, would be fraught with unparalleled disaster—not to the "System," but to the people.

Since Bob's return from Europe I had seen him but a few times. Up to October 1st he had not been near the Stock Exchange or "the Street." Shortly after the listing of the "Anti-People's Trust," as "the Street" had dubbed the new trust, he began to show up at his office regularly. This was the condition of affairs when Fred Brownley called me up on the telephone, as I related at the begin-

ning of my story which I did not realize I had been so long in telling. My thoughts had been chasing each other with lightning-like rapidity back over the last five years and the 15 before them, and each thought deepened the black mist over my present mental vision. In the midst of my reflections my telephone rang again.

"Mr. Randolph, for Heaven's sake have you done nothing yet?" It was Fred Brownley's voice. "Things are frightful here. Bob's brokers are selling stocks at five and ten thousand lot clips. Barry Conant is leading Reinhart's forces. It is said he has the pool's protection order in Anti-People's and that it is unlimited, but Bob has the Reinhart crowd pretty badly scared. Swan has just finished giving Conant a hundred thousand off the reel in 10,000 lots, and he told me a moment ago he was going to get Bob himself to face Barry Conant. They're down 20 points on the average, although they haven't let Anti-People's break an eighth yet. They have it pegged at 100, but there is an ugly rumor just in that Bob, under cover of a general attack, is unloading Anti-People's on to the Reinhart wing

that went to my marrow. Bob Brownley in all the years of our friendship had never spoken to me except in kind and loving regard; I looked at him, stunned. I must have shown how hurt I was. But if he saw it, he gave no sign. His eyes, looking straight into mine, changed no more than if he had been addressing his deadliest enemy. Again his voice rang out, "What brings you here? Do you come to plead again for that dastard Reinhart after the warning I gave you?" I clenched both hands until I felt the nails cut the flesh of my palms. I loved Bob Brownley. I would have done anything to make him happy, would willingly have sacrificed my own life to protect him from himself or others, but this madman, this wild brute, was no more Bob Brownley as I had known him than the howling northeast gale of December is the gentle, welcome zephyr of August; and I felt a resentment at his brutal speech that I could hardly suppress. With a mighty effort I crushed it back, trying to think of nothing but his awful misery and the Bob of our college days.

I said in a firm voice, "Bob, in this

rumor for Rogers and Rockefeller, and the rumor is getting in its work. Even Barry Conant is growing a bit anxious. The latest talk is that Reinhart is borrowing hundreds of millions on Anti-People's, and that his loans are being called in all directions. Do you know Reinhart is at his place in Virginia and cannot get here before to-morrow night? If Bob breaks through Anti-People's peg, it will be the worst crash yet."

"All right, Fred," I answered. "I will go over to Bob's right now. I hate to do it, but there is no other hope."

I dropped the receiver and started for Bob's office. As I went through his counting-room one of the clerks said, "They have just broken Anti-People's to 90 on a bulletin that Tom Reinhart is wife and only daughter have been killed in an automobile accident at their place in Virginia. They first had it that Reinhart himself was killed. That has been corrected, although the latest word is that he is prostrated."

I rapped on Bob's private-office door. I felt the coming struggle as I heard his hoarse bellow. "Come in." He stood at the ticker, with the tape in one hand, while with the other he held the telephone receiver to his ear. My God, what a picture for a stage! His magnificent form was erect, his feet were as firmly planted as if he were made of bronze, his shoulders thrown back as if he were withholding the rush of the Stock Exchange hordes, his eyes aflare with a sullen, smoldering blaze, his jaw was set in a way that brought into terrible relief the new, hard lines of desperation that had recently come into his face. His great chest was rising and falling as though he were engaged in a physical struggle; his perfect-fitting, heavy black Melton cutaway coat, thrown back from the chest, and a low, turn-down white collar formed the setting for a throat and head that reminded one of a forest monarch at bay on the mountain crag awaiting the coming of the hounds and hunters.

I hesitated at the threshold to catch my breath, as I took in the terrific figure. Had Bob Brownley been an enemy of mine I should have backed out in fear, and I do not confess to more than my fair share of cowardice. Inwardly I thanked God that Bob was in his office instead of on the floor of the Exchange. His whole appearance was frightful. He showed in every line and lineament that he was a man who would hesitate at nothing, even at killing, if he should find a human obstacle in his road and his mind should suggest murder. He was the personification of the most awful madness. Even when he caught sight of me, he hardly moved, although my coming must have been a surprise. "So it is you, Jim Randolph, is it? What brings you here?" His voice was hoarse, but it had a metallic ring

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"No, You Don't Jim Randolph, No, You Don't."

the way to talk to me in your own office? At any time before, my words and tone would have touched his all-generous southern chivalry, but now he said harshly—"To hell with sentiment! What?" He did not take his eyes from mine, but they told me that he was listening to a voice in the receiver. Only for a second; then he let loose a wild laugh, which must have penetrated to the outer office.

"Eighty and coming like a spring freshet," he said into the mouthpiece, "and the boys want to know if I won't let up now that Reinhart is down? Go back and another them with all they will take down to 60. That's my answer. Tell them if Reinhart had ten more wives and daughters and they were all killed, I'd rend his damned trust to help him dull his sorrow. Give the word at every pole that I will have Reinhart where he will curse his luck that he was not in the automobile with the rest of his tribe—"

"To hell with sentiment!" He was speaking to me again. "What do you want? If you are here to beg for Reinhart and his pack of yellow curs, you've got your answer. I wouldn't let up on that fiendish hyena, not if his wife and daughter and all the dead wives and daughters of every 'System' man came back in their grave clothes and begged. I wouldn't let up a share." I gasped in horror.

"When did these robbers of men and despoilers of women and children ever let up because of death? When were they ever known to wait even till the corpse stiffened to pluck out the hearts of the victims? It is my turn now, and if I let up a hair may I, yes, and Beulah, too, be damned, eternally damned."

I could not stand it. If I stayed, I, too, should become mad. I reached for the doorknob, but before I could swing the door open Bob was upon me like a wolf. He grasped me by the shoulders and with the strength of a madman hurled me half across the room. I sank into a chair.

"No, you don't, Jim Randolph, no, you don't. You came here for something and, by heaven, you will tell me what it is! You know me; you are the only human being who does. You know what I was, you see what I am. You know what they did to me to make me what I am. You know, Jim Randolph, you know whether I deserved it. You know whether in all my life up to the day those dollar-frenzied hounds tore my soul, I had done any man, woman, or child a wrong. You know whether I had, and now you are going to sneak off and leave me as though I were a cur dog of the Reinhart-'Standard Oil' breed gone mad!"

He was standing over me, a terrible yet a magnificent figure. As he hurled these words at me, I was sure he had really lost his mind; that I was in the presence of a man truly mad. But only for an instant; then my horror, my anger turned to a

great, crushing, all-consuming agony of pity for Bob, and I dropped my head on my hands and wept. It is hard to admit it, but it is true—I wept uncontrollably. In an instant the room was quiet except for the sound of my own awful grief. I heard it, was ashamed of it, but I could not stop. The telephone rang again and again, wildly, shrilly, but there was no answer. The stillness became so oppressive that even my own sobs quieted. I gasped as the lump in my throat choked me, then I slowly raised my eyes.

Bob's towering figure was in front of me. His head had fallen forward, and his arms were folded across his breast. But that he stood erect I should have thought him dead, so still was he. I jumped to my feet and looked into his face, down which great tears were dropping silently. I touched him on the shoulder.

"Bob, my dear old chum, Bob, forgive me. For God's sake, forgive me for intruding on your misery."

I looked at him. I will never forget his face. No heartbroken woman's could have been sadder. He slowly raised his head, then staggered and grasped the ticker-stand for support. "Don't, Jim, don't—don't ask me to forgive you. Oh, Jim, Jim, my old friend, forgive me for my madness; forget what I said to you, forget the brute you just saw and think of me as of old, when I would have plucked out my tongue if I had caught it saying a harsh word to the best and truest friend man ever had. Jim, forget it all. I was mad, I am mad, I have been mad for a long time, but it cannot last much longer. I know it can't, and Jim, by all our past love, by the memories of the dear old days at St. Paul's and at Harvard, the dear old days of hope and happiness, when we planned for the future, try to think of me only as you knew me then, as you know that I should now be, but for the 'System's' curse."

The clerks were pounding on the door; through the glass showed many forms. They had been gathering for minutes while Bob talked in his low, sad tone, a tone that no one could believe came from the same mouth that a few moments before had poured forth a flood of brutal heartlessness.

Bob went to the door. The office was in an uproar. Twenty or 30 of Bob's brokers were there, agitated at not getting a reply to their calls. Many were pouring in through the outer office. Bob looked at them coldly. "Well, what is the trouble? Is it possible we are down to a point where the stock exchange rushes over to a man's office when his wife happens to break down?"

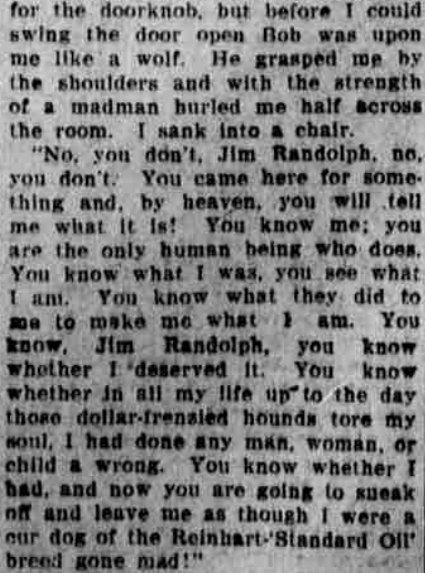
They saw his bluff. You cannot see, twelve stock exchange men, at least not the kind that Bob Brownley employed on panic days, but his coolness reassured them, and when they saw me it was odds-on that they guessed to a man why Bob had ignored his wives—guessed that I had been pleading for the life of "the street."

"Well, where do you stand?" Frank Swan answered for the crowd: "The panic is in full swing. She's a cellar-to-ridge-pole ripper. They're down 40 or over on an average. Anti-People's is down to 85, and still coming like sawdust over a broken dam. Barry Conant's house and a dozen other of Reinhart's have gone under. His banks and trust companies are going every minute. The whole street will be overboard before the close. The governing committee has just called a meeting to see whether it will not be best to adjourn the exchange over to-day and to-morrow."

Bob listened as if he had been a master at the wheel in a gale, receiving reports from his mates. There was no trace now of the scene he had just been through. He was cold, masterful, like the seasoned sea-dog who knows that in spite of the ocean's rage and the wind's howl, the wheel will answer his hand and the craft its rudder. "Jim, come over to the exchange." The crowd followed along. "We have but a minute and I want to have you say for me, for me," he said to me. "I know, Jim, you understand it all but I must tell you how sorrowful I am that in my madness I should have no forgiveness for my admiration, respect, and love for you, yes, and my gratitude to you, as to say what I did. I'll do the only thing I can to atone. I will stop this panic and undo as much as possible of my work; and now that I have wrecked Reinhart I am through with this game forever, yes, through forever."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Good Influence.



"Young men are very valuable in business," remarked the banker.